



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE REMOVES MORE THAN 2,000 ILLEGAL ALIENS FROM THE SOUTH TEXAS REGION DURING DECEMBER

Southwest Border Initiative aims to quickly return illegal aliens to their home countries

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced today that the office here deported 2445 non-criminal aliens during the month of December under the new Secure Border Initiative (SBI).

SBI is a two-month-old program announced by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff during his recent visit to Texas. One SBI aspect allows ICE to quickly remove “other than Mexican” (OTM) illegal aliens to their home countries under an “expedited removal” process. Those OTMs removed from the South Texas Region had been arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) — which includes the Border Patrol — and ICE along the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas.

Expedited removal is an administrative process aimed at reducing the number of OTMs who have spent less than 14 days in the United States, and who are apprehended within 100 miles of the border. OTMs apprehended under the expedited removal program are detained and quickly returned to their countries of origin after they receive travel documents. Since the expedited removal process doesn’t require these aliens to appear before a federal immigration judge, they’re able to be deported more quickly. Consequently, expedited removal reduces the time illegal aliens remain in detention awaiting their deportation from about 30 days to an average of 15 days.

“Expedited removal allowed ICE to be able to remove more than 500 OTMs per week,” said Marc J. Moore, ICE field office director in San Antonio. “The numbers indicate that expedited removal is working, and we’re deporting as quickly as possible those individuals who have no legal right to be in the United States.” Moore oversees ICE Detention and Removal Operations in the south Texas area, which includes the cities of: San Antonio, Austin, Harlingen and Laredo.

Those aliens deported in December had been lawfully ordered to leave the United States by a federal immigration judge; they were removed to the following countries: Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina, Bolivia, China, Panama, Peru, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, and Pakistan.

When cost effective, some aliens from Mexico are deported via bus. OTMs are usually deported aboard both commercial and government aircraft. The government's aircraft is run by the U.S. Marshal Service, and is called the Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS). JPATS is one of the largest transporters of prisoners in the world and handles hundreds of requests every day to move prisoners and criminal aliens nationally and internationally. There is an automatic 10-year bar against deported aliens from legally re-entering the U.S.

The Office of Detention and Removal (DRO) focuses on promoting public safety and national security by ensuring that all aliens who are subject to deportation are removed from the United States as expeditiously as possible

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.